



Complaints Procedure

Version: 5

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1. Context

This complaints procedure outlines University Centre Quayside's (UCQ) process for investigating and acting upon complaints. A complaint is defined as an expression of significant or sustained dissatisfaction where a complainant seeks a specific action to address the issue. The complaints procedure is based on the expectation that all reasonable efforts have already been made to deal with the grievance prior to reaching the stage of a formal complaint.

2. Principles

UCQ considers complaints as important feedback and complainants will not suffer any disadvantage as a consequence of lodging a formal complaint. UCQ will seek to act on complaints in a timely manner and do so impartially and objectively.

All complaints shall be recorded, together with the actions and timescales taken to resolve the complaint.

3. Procedure

Formal complaints must be submitted in writing to the Complaints Officer (complaints@ucq.ac.uk) who will:

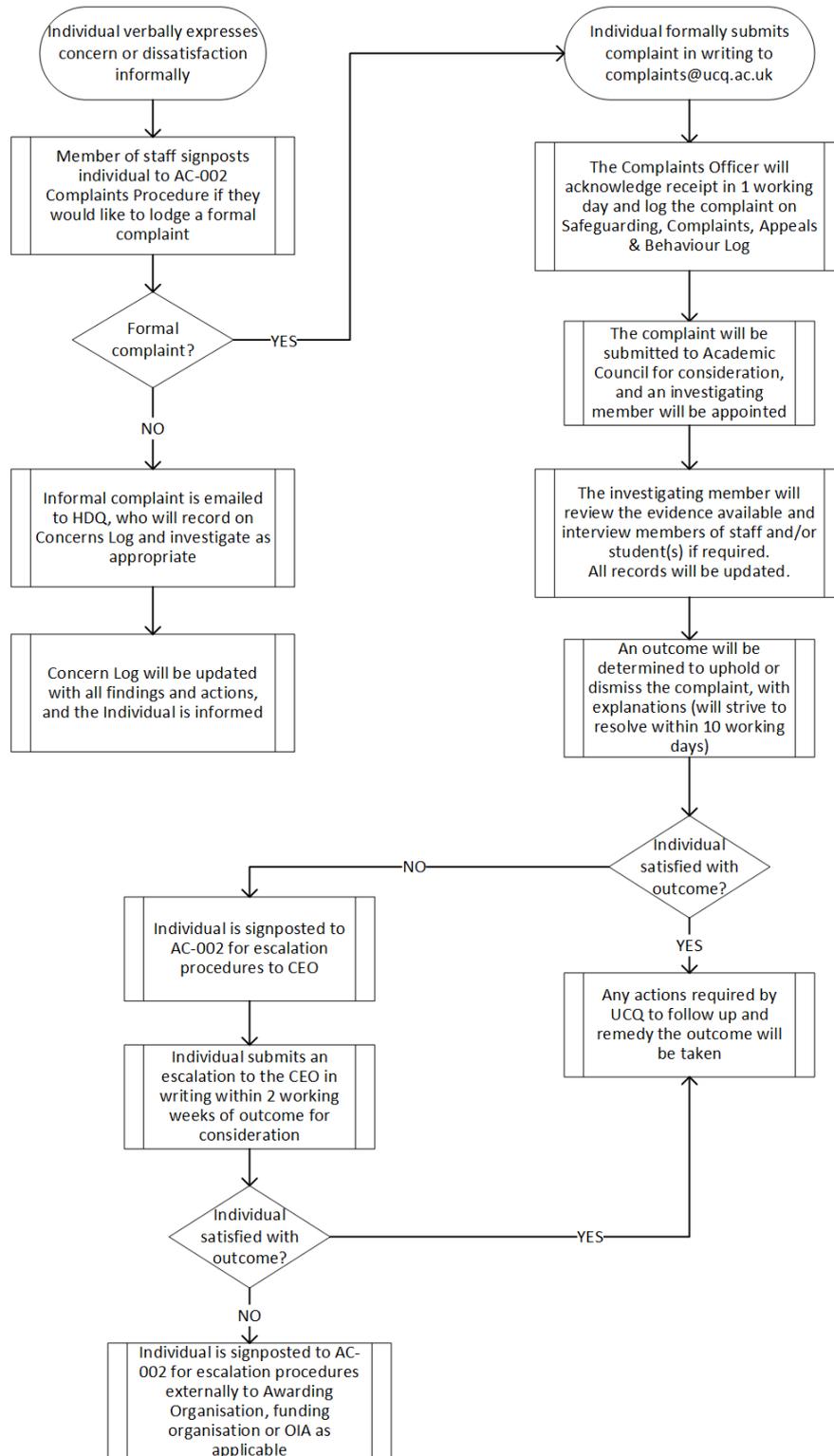
- Acknowledge receipt and log the complaint within 1 working day
- Forward the complaint to the appropriate member of the Academic Council for investigation
- Monitor that the complaint has been responded to within the timeframes set in this procedure

Investigating Academic Council member

An investigating member of the Academic Council will be appointed for a complaint, based on having no conflict of interest with the complaint.

The investigating member will investigate the complaint through a desk based scrutiny of all the available evidence and through interviews with members of staff and/or students/stakeholders if required. The investigating member will be able to draw upon any member of the Academic Council to assist in the investigation of the complaint, unless a conflict of interest exists. The investigation should not be undertaken by anyone who has had prior involvement with the complaint in question.

Process flowchart



4. Outcome

The outcome of a complaint may include the complaint being:

- upheld in whole with a statement as to the remedy; or
- upheld in part with a statement as to the remedy and an explanation regarding those parts dismissed; or
- dismissed with a statement as to the reasons

5. Timescales

All complaints shall be logged and acknowledged within 1 working day.

UCQ will strive to resolve 90% of complaints within 10 working days of receipt and 100% resolved within 20 working days of receipt, unless otherwise agreed with the complainant and contracting authorities.

6. Appeals

The complainant may appeal the formal complaint decision through the Appeals Procedure (AC-001). A maximum of one appeal can be lodged.

7. Escalation

Should the complainant consider that their formal complaint has not been properly investigated they may escalate to the Principal & CEO to review their complaint. The complainant must submit, in writing, the grounds on which the complaint should be reviewed and the resolution that the complainant seeks. This review will only be considered by the Principal & CEO where:

- the request for review has been received by the Principal & CEO within 2 working weeks of the notification of the outcome of the complaint; or
- there were procedural irregularities in the investigation; or
- new evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been available to the investigator of the formal complaint

This will be the final route of escalation within UCQ. Therefore, if the complainant remains unhappy after following the internal complaints procedure and the complaint refers to services received relating to a course or achieving a qualification, the complainant must contact the Awarding Organisation directly. Contact details of the Awarding Organisation can be found on their website. To confirm who the relevant Awarding Organisation is, please contact the UCQ Student Services Team on 0191 275 5015 or review the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Should the complainant address the complaint to the Awarding Organisation and remain unhappy with the outcome, they may raise the complaint with the relevant qualification regulator. Either a representative of UCQ or the Awarding Organisation will be able to offer guidance on the appropriate qualification regulator in each instance and provide contact details.

8. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

UCQ subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of **higher education student** complaints and appeals. Once UCQ's internal procedures have been exhausted and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may be able to apply for a review of the appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), providing that the complaint is eligible under its Rules.

This Complaints Procedure aligns to the good practice framework as published by the OIA in December 2016.

9. Initial equalities impact assessment

Department: All	Completed by: Tara Henderson, Head of Policy & Governance	Date of initial assessment: 20/03/2021
Area to be assessed:	AC-002 Complaints Procedure	
Existing or new policy/procedure:	Existing	
What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)		
External guidance and requirements:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ OIA Good Practice Framework ➤ QAA UK Quality Code; <i>Concerns, Complaints and Appeals</i> 		
Internal guidance and requirements:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consultation with Senior Leadership Team 		

1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the policy/procedure	This complaints procedure outlines University Centre Quayside's (UCQ) process for investigating and acting upon complaints. A complaint is defined as an expression of significant or sustained dissatisfaction where a complainant seeks a specific action to address the issue. The complaints procedure is based on the expectation that all reasonable efforts have already been made to deal with the grievance prior to reaching the stage of a formal complaint.			
2. Which stakeholders/groups are intended to benefit from this policy/procedure?	All stakeholders			
The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:- (1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization (2) Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and (3) Foster good relations between different groups	3. Could the policy/procedure have a disproportionately negative effect impact in terms of the aims set out in (1) to (3) of the Act on any of the protected characteristics?:- High Medium Low No effect	4. Briefly explain how the policy/procedure furthers or prevents the aims set out in (1) to (3).	5. If there is a disproportionately negative impact on any protected characteristics, can it be justified on the grounds of promoting equality or any other reason? If yes, please explain.	
Protected characteristics	Age	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Disability	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender reassignment	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Pregnancy and Maternity	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Race	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Religion or Belief	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable

	Sexual Orientation	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
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6. Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?		Not applicable as no negative PC impact identified
7. What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately negative impact, if any?		None required
8. Based on the information in sections 1 to 7, should this policy/procedure proceed to Full Impact Assessment? (recommended if one or more 'High' under section 2)		No
Assessor signature: 	Approved by: Michelle Elliott 	Date approved: 20/03/2021